REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9-15 and 17-19 are pending in the application. Claims 3, 8 and 16 are cancelled herein. Claims 1, 7, 9, 10 and 15 are amended herein. Applicant thanks the examiner for his time and consideration in conducting a telephone interview on November 5, 2001, the substance of which is set forth below.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE**."

On page 2 of the office action the examiner rejected claims 1-19 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over USP 5,278,898 (hereinafter "Cambray") in view of USP 5,311,572 (hereinafter "Friedes"). On page 3 of the office action, the examiner stated that "[w]ith respect to the display in claims 8 and 16, such is inherent. With respect to the means for manually directing a call to an available agent in claims 8 and 16, note Col. 4, lines 30 - 34." (07/03/2001 Office Action at 3). On page 4 of the office action, the examiner stated that "[w]ith respect to claims 1-6, such method claims would be inherent from the discussion above." (Id. at 4). After discussing the issue with the examiner,

applicant understands that the examiner is citing col. 4, lines 30-34 of Cambray.

Cambray at col. 4, lines 30-34 provides: "An operator may signal availability to the system simply by going on hook, or by a keyboard command to a host computer which informs the system, or by a special agent instrument keyboard which is directly connected to the system."

By contrast, as set forth in twice-amended claim 7, which includes the elements of claim 8, applicant's invention is directed to a hold queue prioritizing system comprising a hold queue prioritizer, wherein said hold queue prioritizer comprises a hold queue call record display, displayed on at least one of said plurality of agent terminals, said call record display including caller identifying information and call prioritizing information for each call record in said hold queue and a means for manually directing a call to an available agent based on said displayed connected call information.

Neither Cambray nor Friedes contain any teaching or suggestion, express or implied, concerning manually directing a call to an available agent based on displayed connected call information. The cited portion of Cambray concerns how an

operator (agent) signals his availability to handle another call—

by going on-hook or by otherwise signaling his availability to the

system. In signaling his ability to handle another call, the

agent may make it possible for the system to route a call to him,

but he does not make any decisions about the routing of a call.

Moreover, applicant respectfully submits that the elements added

to claim 7 are not inherent in Cambray or Friedes (or any

combination thereof) since, there would be no reason for an agent

under such circumstances to have a display showing the hold queue

and call identification and prioritization information. In fact,

Cambray and Friedes both teach away from the present invention as

set forth in amended claim 7 since both Cambray and Friedes teach

that all of the routing decisions should be made automatically by

the system based on predefined criteria. (See, e.g., Cambray at

Fig. 2; Friedes at Figs. 6 and 7.)[1]

Accordingly, applicant submits that nothing in Cambray or

Friedes, whether considered alone, together or in combination with

any other reference of record teaches or even remotely suggests

twice-amended claim 7. Accordingly, applicant submits that the

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[1]   During the 11/5/2001 telephone interview with the examiner, the examiner
expressed his understanding of this analysis and his tentative agreement
pending further review.

rejection of claim 7 under 35 USC 103(a) has been overcome and should be withdrawn. Moreover, since claims 9-14 depend variously from claim 7, applicant submits that the rejections of claims 9-14 under 35 USC 103(a) have likewise been overcome and should be withdrawn.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 3 and claim 15 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 16. Former claims 3 and 16 concerned manual call processing and the means therefore, respectively. Accordingly, for the same reasons set forth above with respect to claim 7, applicant submits that the rejections of claims 1 and 15 under 35 USC 103(a) have been overcome and should be withdrawn. Moreover, since claims 2 and 4-6 depend from claim 1 and since claims 17-19 depend from claim 15, applicant submits that the rejections of claims 2, 4-6 and 17-19 under 35 USC 103(a) have likewise been overcome and should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, applicant submits that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests their allowance. The examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

In the Claims:

Claims 1, 7, 9, 10 and 15 have has been amended as follows:

1 (twice-amended). A method of prioritizing calls connected to an automated telephone system comprising the steps of:

connecting a plurality of calls to said automated telephone system;

obtaining caller identifying information from each of said connected calls;

placing each or said connected calls on hold;

searching a customer database and identifying a customer database record corresponding to the caller identifying information obtained for each connected call;

retrieving information from said identified customer database records that is relevant to call prioritization;

creating a call record for each connected call, each call record including said caller identifying information and call priority data based upon said retrieved call prioritizing information;

inserting each created call record into a hold queue; and

directing a connected call to an available agent based

on said call priority data; and

wherein said step of directing a connected call to

direct to an available agent comprises displaying a list of call

records stored in said hold queue, including said caller

identifying information and said call priority data for each said

connected call on at least one available agent display and

manually selecting a connected call to direct to said available

agent.

7. (Twice Amended) A hold queue prioritizing system comprising:

an automated telephone system;

a call receiver/director for connecting a plurality of

calls to said automated telephone system;

a customer database including a plurality of database

records, each database record including caller identifying

information and information relevant to call prioritization;

a means for obtaining caller identifying information

from each of said plurality of calls connected to said automated

telephone system;

at least one hold queue coupled to said call

receiver/director, said at least one hold queue for holding call records related to said plurality of connected calls;

a plurality of call center agent terminals coupled to said automated telephone system for handling said connected calls; and

a hold queue prioritizer responsive to said caller identifying information from each of said plurality of calls connected to said automated telephone system, for retrieving at least a portion of said call prioritizing information stored in each said database record corresponding to each connected call and for selecting a connected call to direct to an available agent responsive to said at least a portion of said call prioritizing information;

wherein said hold queue prioritizer comprises a hold queue call record display, displayed on at least one of said plurality of agent terminals, said call record display including caller identifying information and call prioritizing information for each call record in said hold queue and a means for manually directing a call to an available agent based on said displayed connected call information.

9. (Amended) The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed

in claim [8]7, wherein said displayed call prioritizing

information comprises raw customer information retrieved from each

said customer database record.

10. (Amended) The hold queue prioritizing system as claimed

in claim [8]7, wherein said displayed prioritizing information

comprises a call priority score derived by said hold queue

prioritizer responsive to said call prioritizing information

retrieved from each said customer database record.

15. (Twice Amended) A system for prioritizing calls on hold

and connected to an automated telephone system comprising:

a call receiver/director for receiving a plurality of

calls connected to said automated telephone system and for

directing said plurality of connected calls to a plurality of

agent terminals coupled to said call receiver/director;

a customer database, including customer database records

including caller identifying information and call prioritizing

information;

a hold queue prioritizer, coupled to said call

receiver/director, said hold queue prioritizer including:

a means for obtaining caller identifying information

from each of said plurality of connected calls;

a means responsive to said obtained caller identifying

information, for searching said customer database

to identifying customer database records

corresponding to said obtained caller identifying

information for each of said plurality of connected

calls, and retrieving said call prioritizing

information from each of said identified customer

database records;

a means for creating a call record for each of said

plurality of connected calls, each call record

including said caller identifying information and

said call prioritizing information;

at least one hold queue, coupled to said call hold queue

prioritizer for storing said created call records; and

a means for selecting a connected call to direct to an

available agent based on said call prioritizing information;

wherein said means for selecting a call to direct to an

available agent comprises an on hold call record display for

displaying said plurality of call records stored in said hold queue, said displayed call records including caller identifying information and call prioritizing information and a means for allowing an available agent to manually select a connected call to direct to said available agent based on said displayed call prioritizing information.